CELTA TERMINOLOGY

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CELTA (*Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults*) is the world's most honoured entry-level credential for teaching ESL or EFL (TESL / TEFL). It is accepted throughout the world by organizations which employ English language teachers. According to ESOL Examinations (University of Cambridge), over 900 courses are offered at more than 230 centres worldwide and produce over 11,500 successful graduates every year.

TEFL or TESOL are terms often used to describe qualifications for English Language teachers. CELTA, the most widely taken initial TESOL / TEFL qualification of its kind in the world, was previously known as CTEFLA and the RSA certificate.

CELTA is an intensive course that normally lasts for four weeks, and during that period candidates encounter a special CELTA terminology and various catchphrases. Terminology can be regarded as a set of technical words or expressions that are used in a particular subject; however, terminology is not the end but a means to describing the end – it helps people talk about their specialist area, language teaching, in an efficient and precise way. Therefore, it can be useful for CELTA candidates to learn terminology needed for the course. The aim of this paper is to provide a list of words and phrases used at CELTA courses all over the world[1].

In favourable circumstance, English teachers work with a small number of students and then when giving ***instructions*** (the words teachers use to set up a task, and these should be as clear and concise as possible), they should raise or 'chest' their worksheet for all to see as they orientate them to the task. The worksheet is placed at the level of chest, below the neck, so such a term is used. Teachers should also 'withhold' the worksheet, i.e. only give it out at the end of the instructions giving process in order to keep the students' attention.

Having instructed the students how to do the task, ELT should check whether they have understood what to do or not; this process is known as ***checking instructions***, whereas the questions ELT asks are called ***Instruction Checking Questions***, or ***ICQs***. These questions are usually closed questions in nature. For example,

ELT: Should you read the whole text?
Ss: No.

ELT: Are you given five minutes to do this exercise?
Ss: Yes.

[1] The words and phrases belonging to CELTA terminology are presented bolded and italicized, excluding verbs, which are given in inverted commas.

CELTA makes distinction between ***Language-based lessons*** (where vocabulary, grammar and/or functions are taught) and ***Skills lessons*** (either receptive or productive skills lessons). Namely, it is important to be clear as to what your main aim is, and determine whether your lesson primarily focuses on improving the students' ability with language, or improving their ability with skills.

The basic framework for analysing grammar, vocabulary and functional language is ***MFPA*** (Meaning – Form – Pronunciation – Appropriacy). This framework is applied in the given order of priority; the strategy of ***Meaning before Form*** is the idea that it makes more sense to convey and check meaning before you highlight form and pronunciation, i.e. why practise a phrase students do not understand. The last category of MFPA is ***Appropriacy*** – it helps ELTs consider whether a piece of language can be used universally or if learners need to know whether it is: formal, neutral, informal; dialect specific; colloquial; slang; taboo; more common in spoken or written language.

After conveying meaning it is important to check students have understood the meaning of a word or grammatical structure by asking ***Concept Check Questions***, or ***CCQs***. These questions can be simple but relevant closed questions, perhaps followed by more open and personalised ones; two or three CCQs usually suffice. Let us consider the following structure:

John <u>was having</u> lunch when his mother <u>rang</u>.

After analyzing the meaning, employing various techniques, ELT should check whether the students have understood the structure. Regarding this, some of the relevant CCQs might be:

ELT: Did John start eating before his mother rang?
Ss: Yes.

ELT: What happened in the middle of John's lunch?
Ss: His mother rang.

ELT: When his mother rang, did he finish having lunch?
Ss: No.

As has been mentioned, there are two types of English lessons: (1) Language-based lessons, and (2) Skills lessons. Language-based lessons can have three basic structures. There are the stages of each subtype given below.

Language-based lesson (a): Presentation – Practice – Production (PPP)

- **Lead-in**
- **Set context** (e.g. story / anecdote)
- **Language clarification**

Elicit TL
Clarify meaning using the context
Check meaning using the context
Highlight form and pronunciation
Drill

- **Controlled practice** of TL
- **Freer practice** of TL

Language-based lesson (b): Test – Teach – Test (TTT)

- **Lead-in**
- **Test** (e.g. Ss do gap-fill, definition-matching, categorising, ordering, discussion, role play)
- **Feedback to test (language clarification)**
  Go over task and clarify and check meaning using the context, highlight form and pronunciation, and drill
- **Test / Controlled practice** of TL
- **Freer practice** of TL

Language-based lesson (c): Text-based presentation

- **Lead-in**
- **Reading / Listening**
  Orientation to text
  Pre-teach vocabulary (if necessary)
  Content focus (gist task)
  FB on content
- **Focus on language from text**
  Clarifying and checking meaning using the context, highlight form and pronunciation, and drill
- **Controlled practice** of TL
- **Freer practice** of TL

All the subtypes of Language-based lesson have three stages in common: lead-in, controlled practice of target language, and freer practice of target language. A ***lead-in*** is the initial stage of every lesson that last for about five minutes when ELT established the topic and raises student interest in it. ***Controlled practice*** focuses on meaning and accuracy; it provides exercises that limit the students' attention to the target structure or function so that it can be accurately produced. These exercises should be meaningful and realistic (not isolated, unconnected practice sentences). ***Freer practice*** is the last stage of a language lesson, after controlled practice, in which students should use the target language in a communicative task.

ELTs should provide pair/group work wherever possible. During pair/group work, ELT should walk around the classroom and check students' work and help if needed; it is called ***micro-teaching***: the process of 'monitoring' accuracy – focused stages, asking guiding questions, helping students recall rules, encouraging peer teaching.

Skills lessons can be divided into: (a) Receptive skills lessons, (b) Speaking lessons, and (c) Writing lessons. There are the stages of each subtype given below.

Receptive skills lessons (Reading, Listening)

- **Lead-in**

- **Orientate Ss to text**
- **Gist task**
  Set task
  Ss read or listen
  Ss confer
  FB answers
- **Pre-teach vocabulary**
- **Detail task**
  Set task, Ss read or listen, Ss confer, FB answers
- **Follow-up activity**
  Speaking activity (e.g. discussion, role play)

Speaking lesson

- **Lead-in and set context for speaking**
- **Content preparation**
  Ss generate ideas (e.g. listen to a model, brainstorm, note-taking)
- **Language preparation** (e.g. functions, vocabulary, grammatical structures from model or from teacher)
- **Speaking**
- **Content feedback**
- **Language feedback**

Writing lesson

- **Lead-in and set context for writing**
- ***Optional: Reading** (to provide a model of text type)
- **Language preparation** (e.g. layout, vocabulary, fixed expressions from model or from teacher)
- **Content preparation**
  Ss generate ideas (e.g. brainstorm, note-taking)
- **Writing**
- **Content feedback**
- **Language feedback**

Let us analyze a typical receptive skills lesson since speaking and writing lessons are usually included within the stages of this type of lesson. As in case of language-based lessons, a receptive skills lesson starts with a short lead-in phase. Then ELT should 'orientate' students to the text that is going to be read or heard. ***Orientation to text*** is also a short stage whose aim is to get students acquainted with the topic of the text – it can be demonstrated by pictures, discussing the setting or characters and so on. ***Gist task*** applies to reading and listening stages in receptive skills lessons and text-based presentation only. It is where the learners listen or read for general understanding, without getting bogged down in details. A gist task should be low-demand and not focused on a specific area of the text. Within ***pre-teach vocabulary*** stage ELT introduces vocabulary items needed for the listening / reading tasks. These would be vocabulary items that could be easily identified as beyond students' level, but necessary to understand the passage. Difficult vocabulary items that are not relevant to understanding the

main point of the passage, or are not related to key information should be ignored. A ***detail task*** stage is set before the listening to / reading the same passage a second time and then students are asked to listen for more specific, but relevant information. In the end, there is a ***follow-up activity*** stage with some sort of feedback, and usually involves the students speaking or writing about the topic of the text.

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